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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Arab Summit, Syria-Iran,  
Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq (3/24-27)

11. Summary: The Syrian weekend papers reported a statement by Sudanese President Omar Hasan al-Bashir prior to the imminent Arab summit in Khartoum, that "it is necessary that the Arab summit support Syria and reject pressures on it and on other Arab countries." Papers also reported the preliminary ministerial meetings by Arab Foreign Ministers with the participation of Foreign Minister Walid al-Mouallem. The Ministers endorsed a draft resolution that stressed Arab countries' firm support of Syria's right to restore the occupied Syrian Golan to the 4th of June, 1967, line. The draft resolution also asserted that all the measures taken by the Israeli authorities to change the legal, natural and demographic situation in the occupied Golan are illegal and constitute a violation of international agreements, the UN charter and international resolutions. The Ministers also endorsed a draft resolution on supporting peace, development and unity in Sudan and making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"On the eve of the Khartoum Summit, Sudanese President Al-Bashir: We trust the wisdom and diplomacy of the Syrian leadership. The Arab street is awaiting decisive decisions from the summit. The continued US occupation of Iraq is a provocation to its people. The Arab leaders who will not attend the Summit have their own reasons" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/27)

"Arab Foreign Ministers approve a number of the Arab Summit draft resolutions. Arab FM's support Syria's demand to restore the occupied Syrian Golan, reject US sanctions on Syria, back the Palestinian Authority, reject unilateral Israeli measures, support Lebanon's efforts to restore Shebaa farms, and support the unity and sovereignty of Iraq, the activation of the Arab peace initiative and forcing Israel to implement international resolutions" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/27)

"Vice President Al-Shara conveys a message from President Asad to President Mubarak and wishes success to the Lebanese national dialogue, saying that Syria has accomplished what is required of

it by UNSC resolution 1559" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/24)

"A message from President Asad to Iranian President Ahmadinejad on developments in the region conveyed by Vice President Al-Shara. Al-Shara discusses with Iranian President Ahmadinejad and senior Iranian officials situation in the region and stresses that Iraq's interest lies in its territorial integrity, its stability and ending the foreign occupation of its land" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 3/26)

"Al-Shara conveys a message from President Asad to the Saudi King. Intense talks on current developments in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon and ways of enhancing joint Arab action" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/25)

"At the end of his mission at the UN, Deputy Foreign Minister Faysal Mikdad meets with Jan Eliasson, President of the UN General Assembly, who confirms that Syria has worked in a credible way with the international organization and respected its resolutions and boosted its role" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/25)

"On the eve of resuming the Lebanese dialogue, Lebanese circles emphasize commitment to resistance. Lebanese MP Michel Aoun emphasizes: Failure of the Lebanese dialogue will topple the government" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/27)

"One Palestinian martyred, four injured by Israeli assaults. Olmert derives power from the world community to support his unilateral disengagement plan. Amr Mousa, SecGen of the Arab League, denies legitimacy of such a unilateral step" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/27)

"Abbas suggests secret negotiations leading to a settlement.

Leader of Israeli party, Israel Is Our Home, Avigdor Lieberman calls for substituting the West Bank settlements for A'ra Valley" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/26)

"Lebanese dialogue resumes today amid criticisms over selectivity of the tours of Larsen --UN SecGen Envoy to the Middle East. Former Lebanese MP al-Ferzali: Larsen's statements on borders constitute interference in our internal affairs.... Temor Goksel, Spokesman of the UN International Interim Forces in South Lebanon, has spoken the truth" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/26)

"Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace and sovereignty continue during the tours of Terje Roed-Larsen, the UN Middle East envoy. Meetings prior to the resumption of the Lebanese national dialogue emphasize rejection of foreign hegemony" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/25)

"Deaths and casualties in assaults in Baghdad, Samurra and Al-Mahmoudieh. A Congressional delegation in Iraq expresses frustration" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/26)

"US forces kill about 20 Iraqis praying in Husseinieh and arrest 40 members of Iraqi security forces" (Government-owned Tishreen, 3/27)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Mechanisms for Implementing the Summit Resolutions Come First"  
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Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (3/26): "The Arab summit is held this year under highly extraordinary circumstances and in a situation that requires the highest degree of seriousness, not only in reaching decisions but also in setting the mechanisms for implementing them....

"Big challenges are facing the Arab nation.... This dictates a change in the performance of the summit.... There is a military, economic, and cultural onslaught against Arab citizens, land, and wealth. There is direct American-Israeli targeting of Arabism and Islam. The examples to prove this are numerous and

can be seen with the naked eye.... This is in addition to the occupations in Palestine and Iraq and the interferences in other places. There are public American plans and statements about further actions entailing sectarian divisions, civil wars, and secondary conflicts. All these dictate that the Arab summit must be different this time...."

#### Israeli Elections/Plans

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#### "Programs of Extremism and Ethnic Cleansing"

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Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, wrote (3/26): "The fever of extremist programs has become fiercer a few days before the Israeli elections.... The acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's unilateral disengagement plan is racist, as it fragments and isolates Palestinian cities and regions and prevents the establishment of a Palestinian state, on the one hand, and involves massive ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem, on the other...."

"Has the international community heard Israeli leaders saying that Israel will draw its border unilaterally, as if Palestinians and the United Nations do not exist...? Why wasn't there any international comment on this, while the United States interferes and tries, in cooperation with some of its cheap tools in Lebanon, to fabricate a crisis between Syria and Lebanon over the identity of the Israeli-occupied Lebanese

Shebaa Farms?"

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#### "Olmert in Sharon's Footsteps"

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Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, wrote (3/26): "Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's statement that Mahmud Abbas, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, is not a peace partner, threatening to assassinate Khalid Mish'al if he returns to Gaza, and linking establishment of a Palestinian state to Palestinians' acceptance of the border that he will unilaterally draw, can only be seen as electioneering slogans. They are part of a clear political program...."

"Olmert's program torpedoed every possibility for the establishment of a Palestinian state.... Israel is imposing a new fait accompli, taking advantage of international silence, American support and sponsorship, and, more importantly, Arab weakness and the absence of mechanisms that could be used, at the least, to draw the attention of the world to the grave impact of the Israeli measures on the security and stability of the region and the world...."

"The United Nations is applying double standards.... It is incomprehensible and unacceptable that the international organization turn its attention to the implementation of certain resolutions to the exclusion of others, thus serving, theoretically and practically, as a tool in the hands of domineering forces that see the world only through their own interests and international ambitions...."

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#### "Arabs Are More Cognizant of their Own Affairs"

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Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, criticized, on (3/25), UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen's statements in Beirut calling for the demarcation of the Syrian-Lebanese border and the establishment of diplomatic relations:

"American encroachment upon Arabs and disdain for their will and sovereignty have emboldened many who walk under the American banner and live under the American cloak, to dare to encroach

upon the Arab nation and its countries and peoples and install themselves as legislators, deciding on behalf of other countries and governments the nature of relations among the Arab countries (Syria and Lebanon for example), and ordering demarcation of borders and the establishment of diplomatic relations....

"The time has come for the Arab nation to wake up and join ranks to confront this American and international disdain for it and its will and sovereignty....

"Arabs can solve their problems by themselves, and they do not need advice from foreigners. The relations between Syria and Lebanon are to be determined by the two countries, not by those who come for recreation and to issue orders and make statements that express the American vision...."

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